

Trade and Market Headlines

Central Darfur



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December 2013 to February 2014

- **Cereal** prices remained high this quarter. In Zalingei market, for example, the price of a sack of millet in January 2014, which is harvest time, was 67% higher than the price in January 2013, and the price of a sack of sorghum was more than double the price in January 2013. Although very high, cereal prices in most monitored markets across the state stabilised this quarter compared with the last quarter (September to November 2013). Possible reasons include the impact of the harvest season as well as some improvement in security in the south of the state (Umm Dukhn area) as a result of local agreements between tribal groups, although the situation deteriorated again in February 2014.
- Markets in the Wadi Salih area (Garsilla, Mukjar, Bendisi and Umdukhn), reported the highest cereal prices during the quarter although they are historically the main production areas. Meanwhile markets in the Azoom area (Abata, Treij and Umshalaya), which are the main cash crop areas, reported the lowest cereal prices. This unusual situation reflects the negative impact of localized conflict on the main areas of production.
- **Livestock** prices showed varied trends in monitored markets during the quarter according to localized conditions. Treij and Zalingei markets continued to be the main livestock markets in central Darfur instead of Um Dukhun, reflecting the impact of localized conflict in the Wadi Salih zone.
- **Cash crop** prices rose sharply across most monitored markets during the quarter, particularly dry tomatoes and dry okra for which prices hit record levels. Not only is this due to the poor seasonal harvest this year, in the case of dry okra it also appears to be due to farmers shifting out of okra production which is vulnerable to the early *Talaig* (grazing by livestock). Although this has been an ongoing issue during the conflict years, the *talaig* has been particularly early this year because of poor grazing further north. Pest infestation has affected tomato production. Some seasonal cash crops appeared in some markets eg sugar cane in Umshalaya market and *bambai* (sweet-potato) in Abata market.
- In terms of fresh **fruit and vegetables**, onion prices fell from January onwards, the normal trend following the seasonal harvest. Likewise, fresh tomatoes registered a slow decline in prices although there was no availability in some markets such as Treij and Delaj markets.
- The **trade route** linking Zalingei with Umdukhn market reopened after the rainy season and the forging of some local agreements, but was not used by traders owing to the high perceived risks.
- Similar to the last quarter, agricultural activities were the main source of **daily labouring** for many households, including winter season farming.

Background and methodology

The goal of this community-based market monitoring initiative is to deepen analysis and understanding of the shifting patterns of trade and markets in Darfur, on an ongoing basis for key agricultural and livestock commodities, to identify how livelihoods and the economy can be supported through trade, and to identify peace-building opportunities through trade. Five CBOs/NGOs plus DRA are monitoring 10 markets across Central Darfur on a weekly basis. Quantitative data, for example the price of Darfur's main cereals, livestock, cash crops and fruits and vegetables are collected weekly as well as qualitative data, for example on sources of supply. Some data are collected on a monthly basis, for example transport costs, transport routes and the impact of the conflict on flows of commodities. DRA holds quarterly analysis workshops with the CBO enumerators.

Participating CBOs and the markets they monitor

Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS)
Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency (DRA)
Almanar
Daro Baida
Albaraka Agriculture Organisation (AAO)
Arebow Charity Organisation (ACO)

Zalingei
Umshalaya
Nerteti
Garsila and Delaig
Bendisi, Umdukhn and Mukjar
Abata and Tereig

